

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000890

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF; AF/S; AND DRL  
PRETORIA AND GABORONE PLEASE PASS TO A/S KANSTEINER  
NSC FOR SR DIR FRAZER  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SF](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY BELIEVES PROGRESS BEING MADE  
TOWARD DIALOGUE

REF: HARARE 883

Classified By: JGSULLIVAN FOR REASONS 1.5B/D

1. (c) The Ambassador met May 8 with South African High Commissioner Jeremiah Ndou to discuss the May 5 visit of Presidents Mbeki, Muluzi and Obasanjo. Ndou confirmed that President Mugabe had accepted that the MDC court challenge of presidential election results would not be an impediment to dialogue. Ndou was still working with the GOZ to clear the remaining sticking point regarding Mugabe's insistence that the MDC recognize him as the "legitimate" President. Ndou said that the visiting presidents had discussed this issue with the MDC leadership and brought back to Mugabe that the MDC accepted that he was "de facto" President and exercising the functions of the President. Ndou said Mugabe appeared to be satisfied with this formulation and prepared to let dialogue continue on that basis. As of the morning of May 8, the South Africans were faxing back and forth to Mugabe's office formulations which might allow both sides to say that the two had agreed to begin a dialogue.

2. (c) Ndou said that ZANU-PF said it wanted a dialogue held without foreign presence, but the MDC is pressing for a foreign facilitation or presence at any dialogue. Nor has it been determined when a dialogue would begin, although the South Africans recognize its urgency. Ndou said it was possible the Presidents might return if this were necessary to assure that the dialogue got off the ground. Preferably, however, this could be done by sending emissaries.

3. (c) Ndou acknowledged that Monday's session had dealt only with how to get dialogue begun and not dealt with any of the complex issues of substance, such as Mugabe's retirement. Indeed, what the dialogue should focus on had not been addressed. One idea would be to seek to resolve the differences among the several different constitutions presented in recent years as a way to assure a new presidential election, changes in electoral procedures, etc. Ndou said that ZANU-PF was divided on this idea. The MDC was concerned that its civil society supporters might oppose the MDC acting on behalf of civil society.  
SULLIVAN